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ABSTRACT

A study was done to test four hypotheses on the orientation of American Urban Administrators toward cultural diversity management in the public sector workplace. The study sought to test: (1) the extent of familiarity with the literature on cultural diversity; (2) relative ranking of cultural diversity management capabilities; (3) how women and minority administrators ranked these capabilities as compared to white male administrators, and (4) graduate education in public administration as an indicator of managerial competency. A mail survey of 500 city managers and human resource management directors in United States cities of populations over 50,000 was conducted in summer 1993 and resulted in a total of 99 respondents. Among the major findings were that a third of respondents were not familiar with the literature on cultural diversity, particularly the Hudson Institute's study, "Workforce 2000". Cultural diversity management competency was considered as important by an overwhelming majority of these participants who ranked it overall as 6th highest among 19 listed competencies. In general, women, minorities and administrators with professional public administration education demonstrated greater sensitivity toward cultural diversity management than did other respondents. Of all respondents 85 percent viewed such diversity competencies as very important but among women 97 percent and among minorities 86 percent viewed these competencies as very important. An appendix contains the survey instrument. (Contains 27 references.) (JB)

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ED 369 350

ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

A RESEARCH REPORT FROM

THE CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

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(Public Administration
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ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

by

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A paper prepared for presentation at the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April, 14-16, 1994 Palmer House, Chicago. The survey data utilized in this paper were collected as a result of a 1992-3 NASPAA (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration) supported Cultural Diversity Innovation project at Indiana State University. The authors of this paper are responsible for the analyses and conclusions presented in this paper. These do not necessarily represent the position of the Center for Governmental Services or Indiana State University. The staff members and Graduate Students of the Center for Governmental Services supported the project activities: Mary Richmond, Chaqra El-Houcin, Terry Soviak, Ibrahim Garba, Maria Lorenzo-Carballo, Liang Wu, Harinder Sidana and Anita Srivastva. The authors appreciate the inputs of colleagues who had reviewed the survey instrument and made suggestions for its improvement: Professor John Crittenden, Professor Robert Puckett, Professor Michael Erisman and Professor Chris Perry (all of Indiana State University). Professor Christopher Daniel (Kentucky State University) and Simani Price, a graduate student in the Department of Psychology at Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University.

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"ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT"

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ABSTRACT

This working paper tests four hypotheses about the orientations of American Urban Administrators toward Cultural Diversity Management in the Public Sector workplace. A mail survey of 500 City Managers and Human Resource Management Directors in the U.S. cities with more than 50,000 population was conducted in the summer of 1993. A total of 99 respondents completed and returned the mail questionnaires. The major findings were as follows. About a third of the respondents were not familiar with the literature on cultural diversity. Cultural diversity management capability was considered as important by an overwhelming majority of these administrators. In general, women, minorities and administrators with professional public administration education demonstrated greater sensitivity toward cultural diversity management. These research findings may have some implications for Public Administration education and training programs. Public Administration educators may consider these implications.

I.

INTRODUCTION

This empirical study deals with the attitudes of City Managers and Urban Personnel Administrators toward managing culturally diverse workforces in the urban government. A number of scholars have written about cultural diversity in the workplace [Johnston, 1985; Cox, 1993] and some of these writings have dealt with cultural diversity in the public sector workplace [Mohapatra, 1990; Mohapatra and McDowell, 1992; Farr, 1992; Hawkins, 1992]. Some researchers have utilized empirical methods to study the attitudinal orientations of the public managers toward a culturally diverse workforce of the year 2000 [Mohapatra, 1990]. This present study provides some empirical analyses about the attitudes of the urban public managers.

II.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: MANAGERIAL ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN WORKPLACE

In this section, we will review a few published studies dealing with the managerial attitudes toward cultural diversity in workplace. These studies are not limited to the public agencies. These include various work settings including public agencies, private businesses, academic settings and voluntary organizations. In a study of the minority affairs administrators' attitudes toward cultural diversity, Ruth Moyer (1992) found that these administrators emphasized institutional commitment to cultural diversity as the most important element of programmatic success of cultural diversity. The city government of Los Angeles organized a training program to manage change while maximizing the capabilities of its culturally diverse staff (Brownridge et.al. 1992). The results of this program were highly positive. A number of management training videos are available that emphasize cultural diversity in the workforce and the key issues associated with the management of culturally diverse workplace (Wiggleworth, 1992). A survey of managers conducted by the American Management Association concluded that a majority of these survey respondents felt that the culturally heterogeneous work groups create solutions to problems that are more innovative than those developed by a homogeneous group (Anonymous 1993). Watson and associates (1993) studied the impact of cultural diversity on the performance of task groups in work settings. It demonstrated the high level task completion scores of the heterogenous work groups than that of the culturally homogeneous groups. Using the findings of a research in hospital management settings Joan Haratani (1993) concluded that an effective minority employee retention program will require a formal mentoring program and a complaint handling system within the hospital administrative setting. In a comparative study of the American and the Indian managers, Vaught and Abraham (1992) found that interpersonal communicative competence was important in managing a culturally diverse workforce.

III.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this empirical study is to test the following four hypotheses about the attitudes of the urban administrators toward cultural diversity management in the urban public agencies.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1. A majority of the urban administrators would be familiar with the writings about cultural diversity.

H2. The relative ranking of "**CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES**" among the other managerial competencies would be very high.

H3. The women and minority urban administrators would rank "**CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY**" as higher than the white men administrators.

H4. The urban administrators with professional graduate education in Public Administration would assign high rank to "**CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY**" as an indicator of managerial competency.

IV.

DATA SOURCES

The database that provided the basis of analyses presented in this working paper emerged as a consequence of a cultural diversity innovation project at Indiana State University. This project was supported by two NASPAA grants during the 1991-92 and 1992-93 academic years (Mohapatra and McDowell, 1993). In the summer of 1993 a questionnaire (see appendix) was mailed to a random sample of 500 city managers (city mayors were substituted in non-city manager cities) and Personnel/Human Resources Directors in American Cities. A list of all cities that had a population 50,000 was prepared. Then, 250 city managers (or substitutes) and 250 Personnel/Human Resource Directors were randomly chosen by a computer program. At the time of data entry 99 persons had returned the completed questionnaire. Some questionnaires were completed and returned by the surrogates of City Managers and Personnel/Human Resource Directors.

V.

DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

Table No. 1 provides a collective portrait of the survey participants. The City Managers (or their surrogates like CEO, Mayors and Assistant City Managers) constituted 47% of the respondents. The remaining respondents (53%) were Human Resource Directors (or their surrogates). There is an over representation of men (59%) among the respondents. Nearly 58% reported having a master's degree. Nearly 76% were whites and about 12% were African Americans. Most of the respondents had long experience in government service with about 45% saying that they had more than 15 years of such service. Only about 40 persons reported having professional public administration education (MPA/DPA).

Table No. 1

A GENERAL PROFILE OF THE URBAN ADMINISTRATORS
(N = 99)*

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS

City Managers (or surrogates)	47.5% (47)
Human Resources/ Personnel Directors (or surrogates)	52.5% (52)
Total	100%

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (N =99)

Ph.D.	5.1% (5)
MD/DVM	
JD/LLB	3.0% (3)
Master's	58.6% (58)
Bachelor's	26.3% (26)
High School	1.0% (1)
Missing data	6.1% (6)
Total	100%

PRESENT POSITION (N =99)

Elective	2.0% (2)
Political Appointment	30.3% (30)
Merit Employee	31.3% (31)
Other	31.3% (31)
Missing Data	5.1% (5)
Total	100%

ETHNICITY (N =99)

White	76.8% (76)
African-American	12.1% (12)
Hispanic	7.1% (7)
Asian	2.0% (2)
Native American	1.0% (1)
Missing Data	1.0% (1)
Total =	100%

GENDER (N = 99)

Male	59.6 % (59)
Female	38.4% (38)
Missing Data	2.0% (2)
Total =	100%

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION (N = 50)**

DPA/Ph.D.	4% (2)
MPA	76% (38)
Workshop/etc.	20% (10)
Total =	100%

** The remaining reported no special education or training in Public Administration.

YEARS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE (N = 91)

1-5 yrs	18.36% (18)
6-10 yrs	10.20% (10)
11-15 yrs	18.36% (18)
16-20 yrs	23.46% (23)
20 +	22.44% (22)
Total =	100%

Table No. 2

Familiarity with Workforce: 2000 Literature Among Urban Administrators*

(N = 99)

Responses	Percentages
Very familiar	25.5% (25)
Somewhat familiar	40.8% (34)
Not familiar	33.7% (33)
Total =	100%

* Responses to survey question: How familiar are you with current writings about "Cultural Diversity projected in the workforce: 2000?" (e.g. Hudson Institute's study titled Workforce 2000, 1987)

Table No. 2 provides a basis for testing Hypothesis 1. Nearly two-thirds of the urban administrators reported some familiarity with the literature on cultural diversity. The data in Table No. 3 extends this analysis by comparing the responses of non-white and women administrators. It appears that the non-white administrators had a higher level of familiarity with cultural diversity literature than their white counterparts. But there is very little difference among the women administrators in this respect. The graduate degree holder in public administration also appears to be more knowledgeable about cultural diversity literature. We may conclude that this data supports hypothesis no. 1.

Table No. 3

RELATIONSHIPS OF URBAN ADMINISTRATORS' FAMILIARITY WITH CULTURAL DIVERSITY WRITINGS AND THEIR BACKGROUND ATTRIBUTES.

Level of Familiarity	All Urban Administrators N = 99	Gender		Ethnicity		Public Adm. Ed.		Job Typology	
		Male N = 59	Female N = 38	White N = 76	Non-White N = 22	MPA/DPA N = 40	Others N = 27	Personnel N = 47	Others N = 52
Very Familiar	26.5	13.6	47.4	26.3	27.3	25.0	14.8	31.9	21.2
Somewhat Familiar	39.8	49.2	26.3	36.8	50.0	35.0	48.1	42.6	38.5
Not Familiar	33.7	37.3	26.3	36.8	22.7	40.0	37.0	25.5	40.4
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Responses to survey question: How familiar are you with current writings about "Cultural Diversity projected in the workforce: 2000?" (e.g. Hudson Institute's study titled Workforce 2000, 1987)

Hypothesis 2

Table No. 4 provides data to consider hypothesis no. 2. Among the 19 specifically selected managerial competencies "Interpersonal communication" has been ranked as the highest. Cultural diversity has been ranked as the 6th highest competency. There is inadequate support for hypothesis no. 2.

Table No. 4

MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES VIEWED BY THE STATE ADMINISTRATORS AS IMPORTANT IN MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSE WORKFORCE: 2000
(N = 98)

Sl No.	Selected Managerial Competencies	Percent Saying Very Important	Rank Order
1	Evaluating employee productivity	68%	9
2	Motivating employees	88%	3
3	Problem solving and decision making	85%	4
4	Knowledge of participative decision-making	69%	8
5	Using computer packages (e.g., spreadsheets databases)	32%	18
6	Designing research studies or program evaluations	16%	19
7	Developing monetary budgets	56%	12
8	Counseling and disciplining employees	60%	11
9	Interpersonal communication	94%	1
10	Mentoring employees in career development	45%	14
11	Building teamwork in the work group	89%	2
12	Managing conflict in the work group	83%	5
13	Managing diversity in the workplace	81%	6
14	Influencing superiors and peers	46%	13
15	Understanding the social and political environment	67%	10
16	Commitment to democratic values	41%	16
17	Representing your agency to external constituencies	44%	15
18	Knowledge of legal processes	36%	17
19	Knowledge of managerial ethics	77%	7

Hypothesis 3 and 4

Table No. 5 provides a basis for testing hypothesis no. 3 and 4. It appears among all administrators 85% consider capabilities of managing diversity was very important. Among the women administrators 97% viewed it as very important. Among the minority administrators 86% felt the same way. Nearly 82% of the MPA/DPA degree holders felt it to be very important. Consequently, it appears there is partial support for hypothesis no. 3 and no support for hypothesis no. 4.

Table No. 5

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES

Managerial Competencies for the Urban Public Administrators	All Admin. N = 99	Percent Saying Very Important		
		Women Administrators N = 37	Minority Administrators N = 22	MPA/DPA Degree Holders N = 39
Evaluating employee productivity	69.1	76.3	68.1	66.7
Motivating employees	90.6	86.8	85.7	92.3
Problem solving and decision making	87.5	92.1	86.4	79.5
Knowledge of participative decision-making	72.6	76.3	80.9	74.4
Using computer packages (e.g., spreadsheets databases)	33.0	36.8	31.8	38.5
Designing research studies or program evaluations	16.7	16.2	22.7	15.4
Developing monetary budgets	56.7	65.8	50.0	53.8
Counseling and disciplining employees	62.5	71.1	66.7	53.8
Interpersonal communication	95.9	97.4	100.0	94.9
Mentoring employees in career development	47.4	55.3	68.2	43.6
Building teamwork in the work group	91.8	94.7	95.5	92.3
Managing conflict in the work group	85.6	97.4	86.4	82.1
Managing diversity in the workplace	84.4	86.8	90.9	78.9
Influencing superiors and peers	45.8	57.9	36.3	42.1
Understanding the social and political environment	68.0	76.3	54.5	71.8
Commitment to democratic values	43.6	55.3	50.0	50.0
Representing your agency to external constituencies	45.8	57.9	42.9	50.0
Knowledge of legal processes	37.5	47.4	42.9	44.4
Knowledge of managerial ethics	77.3	89.5	72.7	74.4
Knowledge of urban government and politics	59.8	73.7	54.5	61.5
Knowledge of urban policy issues	54.2	68.4	40.9	61.5

CONCLUSIONS

This empirical study attempted to test four hypotheses about cultural diversity orientation among the urban administrators. Two of these hypotheses were supported and two were not supported by the empirical data obtained from 99 urban administrators in the U.S.A. Aside from theoretical considerations of this study there are several managerial implications of this research. For example, do the managers need systematic training about managing culturally diverse workforce? What should be the structure of such training programs? What outcomes may be anticipated from these cultural diversity training programs? Faculty members involved in the Public Administration education and training programs might take these questions into consideration. A number of writings have begun to appear about managerial training implications of cultural diversity in workplace. The attached bibliography includes some of these references.

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August 20, 1993

A 1993 SURVEY OF URBAN ADMINISTRATORS' OPINION ON WORKFORCE 2000

Dear Public Administrator:

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) has awarded a 1992-93 Cultural Diversity Innovation Grant to the Center for Governmental Services at Indiana State University to promote cultural diversity in its MPA (Master of Public Administration) curriculum.

In connection with this project, the Center is conducting a survey of the urban public administrators. The purpose of this survey is to learn more about the opinion of these administrators about projected cultural diversity in Workforce 2000 and to obtain their suggestions about promoting cultural diversity through educational programs. The attached questionnaire has been prepared to obtain your personal views about how the MPA programs may contribute toward an effective culturally diverse workforce in local, state and federal public services by the year 2000. A postpaid envelope is enclosed for your response. Should you have any questions about this survey, please call me at (812) 237-2430 or Mary Richmond (the Center Secretary/Librarian) at (812) 237-2436.

The results of this survey will be reported in aggregate numbers and will not identify individuals surveyed or their agencies. The results of this survey will be submitted as a final report to NASPAA (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration). Should you like to obtain the results of this survey, please ask us for a copy. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

M. K. Mohapatra, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science
Director, Center for Governmental Services
and Master of Public Administration Program

MKM:mr
enclosure

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A 1993 SURVEY OF URBAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS' OPINIONS ON WORKFORCE 2000

1. How familiar are you with the MPA programs offered by the universities that are located in your area?

   ☐ Very familiar ☐ Somewhat familiar ☐ Not familiar

2. Do the departments or schools of Public Administration offering MPA programs in your area occasionally consult with you about their program development, placement assistance, guest lecturing, or adjunct teaching opportunities? If yes, please describe briefly any assistance that you may have given to these programs in recent years.

3. How familiar are you with current writings about "Cultural Diversity projected in the workforce: 2000"? (e.g. Hudson Institute's study titled Workforce 2000, 1987)

   ☐ Very familiar ☐ Somewhat familiar ☐ Not familiar

   Comments:

4. Is your agency or the city government developing any specific plans to manage the culturally diverse workforce of the year 2000? If so, briefly describe below elements of the plans that you think are important.

5. In your opinion, how important should it be for urban public administrators to develop special competencies in managing a culturally diverse workforce?

6. In your opinion, what special knowledge and skills are needed by individual administrators in managing a culturally diverse workforce in your agency and in your city government?

7. In your opinion, how important should it be for the graduate schools/departments of Public Administration offering MPA (Master of Public Administration) degrees to recruit, educate and graduate qualified students belonging to the following groups in response to workforce 2000? [check as appropriate for each group.]

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Comments
Women				
Native Americans				
African Americans				
Asian Americans				
Hispanics				
Disabled				
Other groups (specify)				

Your other general suggestions relating to the recruitment, retention and graduation of culturally diverse students in Public Administration graduate programs (if any).

Listed below are some general managerial competencies that have been considered as important for public administrators. In your personal opinion, how important would these be for the urban administrators supervising the employees in workforce 2000? [check each item]

Managerial competencies for Public Administrators	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Evaluating employee productivity			
Motivating employees			
Problem solving and decision making			
Knowledge of participative descision-making			
Using computer packages (e.g., spreadsheets databases)			
Designing research studies or program evaluations			
Developing monetary budgets			
Counseling and disciplining employees			
Interpersonal communication			
Mentoring employees in career development			
Building teamwork in the work group			
Managing conflict in the work group			
Managing diversity in the workplace			
Influencing superiors and peers			
Understanding the social and political environment			
Commitment to democratic values			
Representing your agency to external constituencies			
Knowledge of legal processes			
Knowledge of managerial ethics			
Knowledge of urban government and politics			
Knowledge of urban policy issues			

Your additional comments, if any, about managerial competencies needed by urban administrators.

9. Culturally diverse employment is on the rise in many urban agencies. Listed below are some strategies that may be used to develop managerial competencies among the women or minorities for higher level positions. Based upon your own experiences in dealing with employees indicate how effective, you think, each of these strategies are. Please feel free to add to this list any additional strategies that you feel might be useful.

STRATEGIES	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective
A. Encourage them to participate in in-house leadership training program.			
B. Encourage them to enter university-based managerial degree programs (e.g., MPA, MBA, MSW).			
C. Encourage them to join in-house public management programs (training workshops).			
D. Providing them with informal on-job training to develop managerial competencies.			
E. Developing in them general political sensitivity.			
F. Encourage them to join professional groups and attend meetings/workshops organized by these groups.			
G. Encourage them to establish political contacts outside the agency.			
H. Mentoring them about career development options in the public sector.			
I. Assist them in networking with other minority/women employees.			
J. Recommend to them reading of professional periodicals in their field of work.			
K. Encourage them to develop their public relations/presentation skills.			
L. Encourage them to develop their global perspectives through readings of international issues.			
M. Encourage them to look for managerial jobs at other levels of government (e.g. state/federal).			
N. Encourage them to look for managerial jobs outside the public sector (e.g. private/non-profit).			
Your additional comments, if any, about developing managerial competencies among the women and minority employees.			

10. Here is a sampling of specific programs that are being planned and/or implemented by the university-based schools/departments of Public Administration offering MPA programs to improve cultural diversity in the public services. In your opinion, how effective would these programs be in providing culturally diverse managerial workforce for public agencies of the year 2000? [check each item]

Types of Special Programs in Schools/Departments of Public Administration	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Your Comments
Developing curricular material for all MPA students designed to emphasize sensitivity toward multi-cultural society.				
Reaching out to recruit, retain and graduate qualified pre-service African-American (and other minorities) women students in the MPA program.				
Recruiting qualified minority/women employees currently working in public agencies to join MPA programs as part-time students.				
Providing specialized workshops on management topics designed to develop leadership skills among women and minority public employees currently holding non-managerial positions.				
Providing an opportunity for minority/women students in the MPA programs to contact high-level women/minority government agency officials for career counselling.				
Establishing faculty/student exchange program with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).				
Scheduling presentations of high level minority/women officials to small groups of minority/women students currently enrolled in MPA classes about career opportunities in public service.				
Encouraging qualified women/minority MPA students to join Ph.D. programs.				
Providing information to minority/women students about successful role models of Professors of Public Administration.				

11. In your opinion, what other programs can be developed by the schools/departments of Public Administration in helping women/minority employees in public agencies in developing their own managerial skills and knowledge?

_____

_____

_____

_____

BACKGROUND DATA

(For statistical purposes only)

12. Number of full-time employees in your city government (check as appropriate):

☐ less than 25 ☐ 26-100 ☐ 101-200 ☐ 201-300 ☐ more than 300

13. Population size of city _____ Name of city _____

14. Circle below your formal title in the city government (Personnel Director, City Manager, Chief Executive Officer)

Other, specify _____

15. Your educational background:

General Education
(Please check highest degree received)

☐ High School or less _____
☐ Bachelor's _____
☐ Master's _____
☐ Ph.D/DPA _____
☐ MD _____
☐ JD/LL.B. _____
☐ Other (specify)

Public Administration Education (Please indicate university's name: optional)

☐ BA _____
☐ MPA _____
☐ DPA _____
☐ Workshops/seminars, etc._____
☐ CPM(Certified Public Mgmt) Training _____
☐ No special education in Public Administration

16. Your current memberships in three major professional organizations (list):

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

17. Gender ☐ male ☐ female

18. Ethnicity ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian ☐ Native American ☐ other (specify) _____

19. Total years of service with urban governments as an elected or appointed official _____
years in present city _____

20. Nature of your present appointment:

☐ Elected official
☐ Political Appointee
☐ Merit system employee
☐ Other specify _____

21. Do you have any other general comments about barriers to advancement for minorities and women employees in urban government agencies? How can individual employees overcome these barriers?

_____
_____
_____
_____

22. Sometimes minorities/women employees may be placed in managerial positions mainly due to Affirmative Action programs, but may lack prestige or influence in the agencies. How can these managers be more effective by acquiring prestige and influence in agencies?

_____
_____
_____
_____

The Center for Governmental Services wishes to thank you again for taking enough of your time to complete this questionnaire. The information obtained from this study will enable us to continue providing public service education of the highest quality to develop managerial workforce for workforce 2000. Should you need a copy of the results of this survey, contact Mary Richmond, (812) 237-2436 or write to Center For Governmental Services, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana 47809.